



**CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM**

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August 26, 1997

Dan Nelson
San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority
P. O. Box 2157
Los Banos, CA 93635

Byron Buck, Executive Director
California Urban Water Agencies
455 Capitol Mall, Room 705
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Dan and Byron:

Thank you for your July 11, 1997 letter commenting on CALFED's Water Quality Programmatic Actions. This is a response to some of the important points you have raised.

I appreciate your support for the concept of a Comprehensive Monitoring, Assessment, and Research Program (CMARP) that we intend to propose. Implementation of this program will provide us with the information gathering tools that will prove critical to adequately understand the severity of water quality problems, to prioritize them for corrective actions, to evaluate the success of prevention and control actions, and to make mid-course modifications as dictated by our adaptive management philosophy. Also, I strongly agree that the real challenge is to find a proper balance between information gathering and action. The agricultural and urban stakeholders have tremendous technical capabilities to bring to bear on this task; your assistance is invited, and will be appreciated.

As your letter suggests, I have asked staff of the Water Quality Program to take the lead in developing the CMARP, although the Program will incorporate assessment activities related to the ecosystem, levee and channel stabilization and water supply reliability activities of CALFED, in addition to water quality. A draft framework document will be circulated to you and other stakeholders to enable your timely input to development of the CMARP.

CALFED Agencies

California

The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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and other aspects of the CALFED Program, we intend to find ways to supplement or replace regulatory approaches with effective voluntary incentive-based methods.

With respect to the need to address total organic carbon and bromide, we are relying more on implementation of the Preferred Alternative to accomplish improvements in salinity, bromides, and natural organic matter than on the Water Quality Common Program. Reduction of the contribution of Delta peat islands to the organic carbon load in export water may, however, be significantly affected by Water Quality Common Program actions.

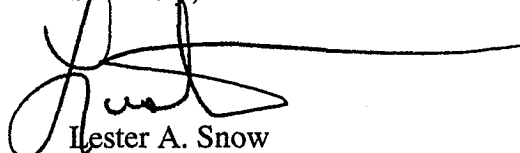
We view changes in land management practices as a hierarchy of potential actions beginning with voluntary, compensated, changes in cropping, soil, and water management practices by the current landowners; followed by temporary fallowing; and, by voluntary compensated permanent land retirement as a last resort. Maintenance of current agricultural productivity through such actions as drainage treatment are certainly among the options we believe should receive priority.

Regarding the issue of mine remediation and possible liability, we completely agree that, on one hand, mine remediation has the potential for greatly reducing toxicant concentrations affecting the Delta and its resident species; but, on the other hand, toxic site liability and financial responsibility issues present highly complex challenges. As the CALFED Program unfolds, we will look for opportunities to enable CALFED to participate in a meaningful way in mine remediation activities, particularly where there is no identified financially responsible party.

Because sedimentation control measures in the watersheds of the Delta generally provide opportunities for ecosystem restoration, we think actions of this type more appropriately belong under the Ecosystem Restoration, as opposed to the Water Quality, component of the CALFED Program. Selection of ecosystem restoration actions will take into account opportunities for reducing erosion and sedimentation that adversely affect the ecosystem.

CALFED staff will be pleased to participate in a workshop to discuss San Joaquin Valley water quality issues, discuss potential actions related to Clean Water Act revision, or other water quality issues of interest to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lester A. Snow", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lester A. Snow
Executive Director